

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 102 is amended, and claim 138 is new. Claims 102-138 are now pending in the application. (Claims 1-101 were previously canceled.) Claims 103 and 135 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Applicants respectfully request examination and consideration of the application.

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 107-134 and 137 are allowed. Applicants note that claim 135, because it depends from an allowed claim, should be rejoined and allowed. (MPEP § 821.04.)

Claims 102, 104-106 and 136 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,286,208 to Matsuoka ("Matsuoka") and U.S. Patent No. 6,117,349 to Distefano et. al. ("Distefano"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 102 now recites "an open space immediately below the contact tip between the second side of the first leaf portion and the first side of the second leaf portion into which at least part of the first leaf portion can deflect when the contact tip is depressed." Applicants believe that the foregoing is at least somewhat similar to a feature the Examiner determined to be allowable in other claims.

Moreover, Matsuoka's device, as exemplified by the marked-up copy of Figure 4 included in the Office Action dated April 2, 2007 (hereinafter the "April Office Action"), has no open spaces immediately below the contact tip; rather, element 16b (labeled "second support (post structure)" in the marked up version of Figure 4 attached to the April Office Action) is immediately below the contact tip (labeled contact tip in the marked up version of Figure 4 attached to the April Office Action). For at least this reason, claim 102 is novel over Matsuoka.

In addition, it would be contrary to the teachings and purpose of Matsuoka to remove element 16b. A purpose of Matsuoka is to precisely control the amount of forward and backward movement of contact tip, and this can only be accomplished by precise control of the flexing of portions 14 and 15. (Matsuoka col. 2, lines 35.) Without portion 16b, only portion 14 would flex, and the precise control of the amount of forward and backward movement of contact tip in response to contact by terminal 18 (see Figure 3 of Matsuoka) could not be achieved. Portion 16b is thus essential to Matsuoka and cannot be removed. For at least this reason, claim 102 is not obvious in view of Matsuoka.

DiStefano does not make up for the above-discussed deficiencies in Matsuoka. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 102 is patentable over Matsuoka and DiStefano.

Claims 103-106, 136 and 138 depend from claim 102 and, at least because of that dependency, are also patentable over Matsuoka. Because claim 103 depends from now presumably allowable claim 102, claim 103 should be rejoined. (MPEP § 821.04.)

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all of the claims are allowable and the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a discussion with Applicants' attorney would be helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (801) 323-5971.

Respectfully submitted,

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By /Dax D. Anderson/
Dax. D. Anderson
Reg. No. 56,720

Kirton & McConkie
1800 Eagle Gate Tower
60 East South Temple
P.O. Box 45120
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-1004
Telephone: (801) 323-5971
Fax: (801) 321-4893